

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims below.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A vehicle chassis comprising:
 - two longitudinal side rails, each of said side rails having a front end, a front portion and a central portion, and each of the front portions being arranged in use to be higher than the respective central portion;
 - a first cross member having a length and extending in a transverse direction between the front ends of the side rails and arranged in use to be below said front ends over a substantial part of ~~[[its]]~~ the length;
 - a second cross member extending in a transverse direction between said central portions of the side rails;
 - two secondary longitudinal members each extending between the first cross member and the second cross member; and
 - two central support sections, each of which is longitudinally spaced between the first and second cross members and connects a ~~respective~~ one of the side rails to an adjacent one of the secondary longitudinal members.
2. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 1 and further comprising two vertically extending front support sections ~~by which~~ configured to connect the first cross member ~~is connected~~ to the side rails.
3. (Original) The chassis of claim 1 wherein the secondary longitudinal members are connected to the first cross member at respective connection points which are lower than the front ends of the side rails.

4. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 1 wherein each of the secondary longitudinal members has a front portion which is inclined upwards towards ~~[[the]]~~ a front of the vehicle chassis.

5. (Original) The chassis of claim 4 wherein the front portion is to the front of the central support sections.

6. (Original) The chassis of claim 4 wherein each secondary longitudinal member includes a rear portion which is substantially horizontal.

7. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 6 wherein the side rails each include an inclined portion between the central portion and the front portion and the rear portion of each of the secondary longitudinal members has a length and is adjacent to one of said inclined portions over at least a substantial part of ~~[[its]]~~ the rear portion length.

8. (Original) The chassis of claim 6 wherein each secondary longitudinal member has a weakened bend at the junction between the front and rear portions to encourage downward bending of the secondary longitudinal member in the event of a frontal impact.

9. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 1 further comprising a third cross member extending in a transverse direction between the secondary longitudinal members at a position ~~longitudinally spaced~~ between the first and second cross members.

10. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 9 wherein the third cross member is approximately level, ~~in the longitudinal direction,~~ with the central support sections.

11. (Original) The chassis of claim 9 and further comprising two top mountings for suspension struts, each said top mounting being connected to a respective one of the side rails above a respective one of the central support sections.

12. (Original) The chassis of claim 1 wherein the secondary longitudinal members are positioned below and inboard of the side rails.

13. (Original) The chassis of claim 1 wherein each of the central support sections provides support for a respective suspension mount.

14. (Original) The chassis of claim 13 wherein each of the suspension mounts is positioned on the respective central support section adjacent to one of the secondary longitudinal members so that the secondary longitudinal member provides longitudinal support for the suspension mount.

15. (Original) The chassis of claim 13 wherein the suspension mount is located at a lower end of the central support section.

16. (Original) The chassis of claim 14 wherein the suspension mount is substantially level, in the vertical direction, with the secondary longitudinal members.

17. (Original) The chassis of claim 1 wherein the secondary longitudinal members are connected to the first cross member at respective points inboard of the side rails.

18. (Original) The chassis of claim 1 wherein the side rails, cross members and secondary longitudinal members are bonded together to form a single rigid structure.

19. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim [[18]] 1 wherein the side rails, cross members and secondary longitudinal[[s]] members are welded together.

20. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim [[19]] 1 wherein the side rails, cross members and secondary longitudinal[[s]] members are bolted together.

21. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 1 further comprising a recovery attachment eye attached to the first cross member.

22. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 21 wherein the recovery attachment eye is attached to the first cross member substantially at the mid point thereof.

23. (Currently Amended) The chassis of claim 21 wherein the recovery attachment eye is inclined downwards towards ~~[[the]]~~ a front of the vehicle.

Claims 24-26. (Canceled).

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~~27.~~ (New) A method of improving impact performance in a vehicle chassis having side rails with front ends, first and second cross members connecting the side rails, secondary longitudinal members extending between the first and second cross members, and central support sections connecting the side rails to adjacent secondary longitudinal members, the method comprising:

stiffening and strengthening the chassis by providing the secondary longitudinal members;

distributing and absorbing impact loads by providing the secondary longitudinal members and the front cross member;

spreading impact loads by locating the first cross member substantially below the front ends of the side rails and by connecting the first cross member to the secondary longitudinal members at connection points that are lower than the front ends of the side rails;

allowing the chassis to ride up over obstructions by providing upwardly inclined portions of the secondary longitudinal members; and

preventing upward deformation of the secondary longitudinal members when the chassis rides up over obstructions by providing the central support sections.

rule 1.126

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28. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising supporting the secondary longitudinal members in a lateral direction by providing a third cross member extending between the secondary longitudinal members.

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29. (New) The method of claim 27, further comprising directing frontal impact forces downward by inclining at least front portions of the secondary longitudinal members and providing a recovery eye on the first cross member that is angled in a downward direction.

Rule 1.126